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[P. 10 (A)]

Bribri
Cabecar

114 **Previous Studies.** There are few ethnological studies referring to these peoples. Gabb,[54] Pittier,[55] and Skinner [56] are the sources for the Bribri. The reports of both Gabb and Pittier are important in particular with respect to the account of religious customs and ceremonies which are no longer practised. Skinner emphasizes the material culture of this group in the first half of the present century.

There is far less information concerning the Cabécares. Outside of certain documents published by Fernández,[57] the invaluable report of Gabb, already mentioned, with reference to the Bribri, and the not-too-detailed account by Bishop Bernardo A. Thiel [58] of his own travels or of those who accompanied him,[59] little is available.

121 **Purpose of This Paper.** The purpose of the present study is to give a picture of the manner of living and the way of thinking of the Talamancan in 1956–59. In doing so, we shall take [101] into consideration the two geographically dis- [177] tinct groups as each one demonstrates a different stage of acculturation.

184 **Locational Differences.** The manner of living of the Talamancan people depends upon their 131 geographical location. The northern side of the range is the most isolated, in spite of the valley. Here the rainfall is greater, the forest denser, and the terrain more broken and rugged. 489 Transportation is restricted to foot with the exception of the Talamanca Plain where a horse, dugout, or jeep can be used in parts. In • 491 most of the region, bridges are non-existent and rivers must be crossed by fighting the current. In upper Talamanca and Chirripó hammock bridges of vines are used.

101 The inhabitants of upper Talamanca and 177 upper Chirripó have been isolated since con- quest times and little attention was paid to the 648 Sixaola Plain during the early days of the republic. In fact, until about 1916, only a handful of non-Indian people including a few Costa

[54] Gabb, 1875.
[55] Pittier, 1938.
[56] Skinner, 1920.

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482 (fig. 9, *d*). *Hevas* fastened to the tumpline are also used by both sexes to carry cargo.

487 [137] [438] **Roads.** The forest of southern Costa Rica is among the densest in the world. Trails, however, have been kept open since pre-Columbian times when trade was common between the Pacific and Caribbean sides (*see* Trade). Even today, one passes through cleared tunnels under the matted roots of trees and shrubs which, according to tradition, are the same passages "used by all our grandfathers." Of the three trails which cross the range (*see* Geography), that connecting the Lari region with
• 491 Cabagra is famous for its hammock bridges made of vines which span chasms and swift-flowing, boulder-ridden rivers. These bridges are also known in upper Chirripó. They are
[193] called in Bribri *t'sé* which is the same word used for hammock, vine, bridge, and string. The vines are woven netlike to form one or two sides. The first type can be either a single net, the person crossing sideways as a crab, or it is placed as a railing along a log. To make the second style, two stout vines are swung across the space to be bridged and fastened securely on both sides. A narrow foot path of braided vines is tied to these so as to form a *V*, and the sides are laced in a large V-shape, or netlike, to the braided portion (fig. 11, *a*). These hammock bridges are remade every six months by the men from the nearest houses.

MANUFACTURES

283 [824] [172] [462] One of the most important fibers comes from *pita* (*Agave* sp.). The presence of this plant in the forest is a sign, like the *pejibayes*, of a former habitation site. *Pita* is made into thread to tie arrows, carrying nets, etc. Both men and women prepare this fiber, although it is generally the women's task. The leaf is cut, peeled, and both ends chopped off to even the length. Every five inches the leaf is folded to soften it, and then it is put on a log and scraped with the blunt edge of a machete from the top to the bottom. At the bottom end, the woman pulls the remaining outer fibers off and ties the two ends of the leaf

[a] Pittier, 1938, p. 13.

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a

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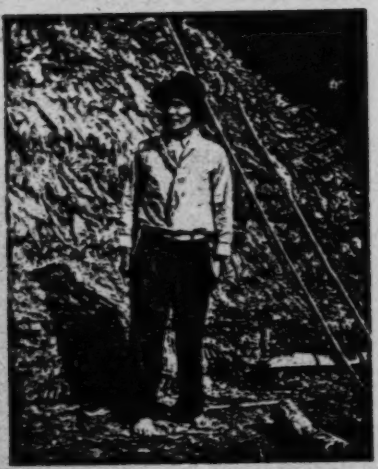

d

a, Vine bridge, Alta Talamanca (photograph courtesy of Gonzalo Marianzo). b, Articles to accompany the dead at first burial, Cabécar, Alta Cord. c, Cabécar medicine man with staff, Talamanca. d, Bribrí medicine man, Talamanca.

[END PLATE 10]